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INAME: HAYDEN, LtGen Michael **Text w/Tape:**

IPLACE: NSA, Ft. Meade, MD; Office of the Director

IVIEWER: HATCH, David A.; COLLINS, Jimmie A.

[Tape 1, Side 1]

Collins: Today is Friday, 26 October 2001. We are speaking with LTGEN Michael Hayden, Director of NSA/CSS, in his office in OPS 2B. I'm Jimmie Collins, along with Dr. David Hatch, Director for the Center for Cryptologic History. This is Oral History 2001-34. The preliminary classification will be UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO unless otherwise specified at the end of the recording. The topic of today's interview is NSA's Presidential Transition effort for President George W. Bush's administration.

Hatch: Thank you, Jimmie. Sir, in the past NSA either did not participate actively in the Presidential transitions, or deferred to CIA, or handled it at a very low level within the Agency. Why did you decide to elevate the level this year?

Hayden: It could have been just because of my past history. I actually was the number two person on an Air Force Presidential Transition Team in, now let's think. When would that have been? Probably 1988, and so, I can recall of the preparations that we did, all the papers, position papers, background papers, briefings, and so on, that we prepared. And then I recalled that once the inauguration had taken place, President Bush, the first, went about, his National Security Staff, went about a four or five month study in which they killed most of the forest land in the eastern United States producing paper after paper. And I think everyone recognizes (that) the paper wasn't the product here, it was the process that was the desired outcome. And it led to kind of a body of strategic thought that guided the administration. Okay, now we've got a transition coming to us. We're gonna have a new president elected. You can see that things are gonna be different. It was clear to me that under either scenario, a democratic or republican President, there will be major changes made in the administration, in people, and, almost certainly, major changes in approach. Even if there were democratic continuity. One aspect of it was, it may be surprising in retrospect; I expected that the odds were higher that Director Tenet would continue under a Republican, than I did under a Democrat. And I mean no judgment on Director Tenet or either party, but I was aware that the first President Bush, when he was Director of CIA, and had been there only a short period of time near the end of an administration, had been willing to stay on, thought that that was a good way to de-politicize the position, and just kind of surmised that that would happen. And so, I knew things were going to be in flux. That was the first point. I had some experience in trying to shape that

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flux. And I guess the third point is (that) we really needed to do some shaping. I mean, if you look at our budget line over the previous eight years, you look at our personnel lines over the previous eight years, those weren't good news stories. And so, if we were going to have a fresh start, I felt as if we had to start fresh right from the first opportunity. And so, we put as great deal of energy into, I think the right word is, positioning ourselves to tell our story whenever an opportunity presented itself.

Hatch: Uh-huh, Yes. With this as background though many of the people felt that your instructions to the transition team were rather general. Was that with a purpose?

Hayden: Well, it was. It was. I mean, just think of the last sentence: to position ourselves to take advantage of opportunities to tell our story when they presented themselves. And so it was pretty much, it was very flexible. We were going to be calling audibles. (It) didn't mean that we didn't know how to run plays. Didn't mean we didn't have a play book, but they were gonna have to be audibles. Being ready to respond is also politically correct. I don't want to get in front of the Secretary of Defense Designate, the DCI, and be down there with an agenda that seemed to be different from theirs. And so, we had our agenda, which was our transformation, and we were prepared to tell the story.

Hatch: Right.

Hayden: So, that's why we left if fairly "soft".

Hatch: Right. Very good. Did you then work with officials at the SECDEF level or at the DCI level to coordinate your message?

Hayden: We did not. But that doesn't seem as much on the dark side as it might at first. We had a clear message, we had our transformation story. We weren't looking to win policy debates that we had lost with the SECDEFF or the DCI, this was telling our transformation story, which had, in general, been public and been blessed by both of our chains of command, IC and DOD.

Hatch: How did you personally participate in the process? I understand you briefed some of the senior officials; you met some who came out here to visit the agency. How did you view your participation?

Hayden: It was less than I thought it would be, but that's because of the long count (TR Note: Referring to the miscount/long count in Florida).

Hatch: Right.

Hayden: And so, you really had less time in that traditional interregnum, between election day and inauguration day. What should have been eight weeks turned into about four. Technically, what should have been nine turned into five, but several of the five were over the holidays and so you really lost a lot of time. And so, we didn't have the... I mean officials simply weren't named early enough for us to begin dialog with them. And so, I didn't see that many. I did see some. Three come to mind immediately: Rich Haver, who was an advisor to the transition and is now an advisor to the Secretary for

intelligence matters; (B% Azalmei Calazad), who was kind of the first flag planted in the Pentagon for the overall transition; and Bill Schneider, who was an old republican hand, knows the business, knew the SECDEF designate. And so, I personally worked with each of those, essentially telling our transformation story. There would have been no surprises there if... I could have passed that briefing out to the DCI or the ASDC3I and they would have said "Oh, yeah. That's the NSA pitch."

Hatch: Okay. Did you brief the incoming SECDEF, the SECSTATE, or any other officials?

Hayden: I have briefed the SECDEF and I have briefed the SECSTATE. The SECDEF was, we can check to get absolute fact, but my memory is, within a month of his confirmation I briefed him. And I should add that when I said "Good morning Mr. Secretary", that was the first syllable I had exchanged with a Secretary of Defense in my time as Director.

Hatch: Ah.

Hayden: So, that was a great leap forward.

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: We had SecState on early. He cancelled... schedule conflicts. I've since briefed him and told our story. Worked out well. Same with the Deputy Secretary of State. Same with the Deputy Secretary of Defense. And we had the National Security Advisor and the Deputy National Security Advisor out here not too many months into the administration.

Hatch: Right, right.

Hayden: And then you know the Vice President came out and gave us half a day.

Hatch: Yes. Quite an amount of time for an official of that level.

Hayden: Right. And all of that, all of that, you can tie a ribbon around and call part of our transition effort. It was all tied to that.

Hatch: Why did you terminate the transition team effort when you did? There are a number of people on the team that felt that they still had some things they could have done profitably for the Agency.

Hayden: I may have terminated them too early. Terry (TR Note: Reference to Mr. Terry Thompson), whom I put in charge of it, and then he segued from that into the DOD office, which was a nice transition, counseled me that he thought they had done pretty much what they could do as a formal team. Keep in mind all of those things I just described to you, Vice President, Condy (Condaleezza) Rice, and so on, followed later, not quite engineered by a formal transition team but, I already told you, part of the transition effort. So, maybe the heavy lifting that could have been done by a team had been done. The battlefield had been prepared, and now, we just needed to let things evolve. I largely took Terry's counsel on it. He said they had done pretty much what they could do. So, I agreed and we stopped.

Hatch: Okay. That's fine. During the transition team's existence, it was clear that

you had read their reports from the different things that were said but you didn't seem to give much mid-course correction or mid-course guidance. Did you find yourself then satisfied with what was going on?

Hayden: I did. Look, remember, I told you that I was on a transition team in the Air Force?

Hatch: Uh-huh.

Hayden: It was very frustrating trying to get voice for that team. I mean the new administration is busy. How many papers do you think are being thrown at them by anybody, everybody. And so, they seemed to be doing well. They weren't, you know, hitting the SECDEF designate, but they were talking to lower level official designates. They were providing papers to transition teams. Terry and I talked frequently. It seemed like that was hitting about the right level. That's pretty much the way I've done it here for almost three years. I can give people a sense and get out of the way.

Hatch: Right. Very good. Right, right. Okay. Can you evaluate the effectiveness of the team? Do you see good results from their efforts or were there other things that you felt could have been done or should have been done?

Hayden: Despite my claims earlier that this was communal and we weren't getting in front of our headlights, which remains true, we stole a march on a bunch of other folks by having our story ready to go. There are other serendipitous things; Rich Haver is a good friend of Bill Black. Alright?

Hatch: Yes. That's good.

Hayden: But I'd rather... What's Joe Paterno's quote? "Luck happens when preparation meets opportunity." And so, there was a lot of that in there. And so, I am quite content with what they laid out, in terms of preparation. And it's worked pretty well. The Vice President came out here first. He's visited all over the community, but he came out here first. I was the first Agency Head in the intelligence community to brief the Secretary of Defense. So – and I think part of that is the fact that we had our message there – we were ready, and made it clear that we were ready.

Hatch: Good, good. Yes. Those were the formal questions that I have. Do you have other things that you'd like to put on record about the transition effort?

Hayden: It went well. Very dependant on the character of the incoming administration. You had an administration coming in that was familiar with Intel. That's good news and bad. (TR Note: Laughter). It is. And this was an administration that had been out, (TR Note: corrects) a party that had been out of power for eight years coming back with a tendency to view things as they last remembered them. So, they came "Intel-friendly", and knowledgeable about national security matters but it then devolved to us to kind of bring them up to speed as to the things that had changed. The Vice President came out. A very astute guy. I had him for several hours. We finally ended our discussions over lunch and gave him some, really, new-age, cutting edge things (that) we were doing, informal discussion,

informal briefings, and he turned to Director Tenet at the end of lunch and said "Some things have changed!" So, that would be my assessment. You can't take this to the bank and say "Okay, here's the formula for working a transition." It was one that... Could we have done things differently? Yes. Could we have done things better? Almost certainly. Would I have changed some decisions? Probably. But all in all, this is a success story. I mean we have become know to the incoming administration and vice-verse, setup some good relationships with people in the correct positions. So, it worked well. And, having Terry do that and then take the position at NCRDEF (National Security Agency/Central Security Services Representative Department of Defense) just worked great.

Hatch: Yeah, yeah. A perfect follow-on. Yes, sir. Anything else you'd like to say, sir?

Hayden: No. That's great!

Hatch: Well, I really appreciated you taking the time. I can guess how busy you must be these days and I appreciate you humoring our needs.

Hayden: It has been a month and a half rich with experience.

Hatch: Well, we'd like to capture that on tape some time soon but we'll end this, now.

Hayden: We will.

Hatch: Thank you, sir.

[End of Interview]